

LOOK
in this Sign
in this Bottle

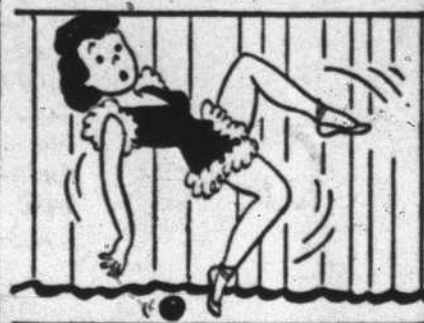
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Tardy Trousseau
*
A Will and a Way
By Will Bernard, L.L.B.

If an Acrobat Sprains an Ankle, Is The Theater Owner Responsible?

A feature of a travelling vaudeville show was a girl acrobat. One evening, at the end of her act, she started walking off the stage. Unfortunately, in some inexplicable manner, a rubber ball had rolled onto the platform. The girl, busy smiling at the audience, stepped on the ball, fell, and sprained her



ankle. Later she sued the theater owner for damages, claiming that he was responsible for keeping the stage clear of all obstacles. But the court turned down her claim. The judge said that the girl couldn't blame the management unless she could have proved that the ball had been lying there for some time—long enough to attract the attention of the stage hands.

May a Bride Collect Damages If Her Trousseau Isn't Ready On Time?

A suburban debutante ordered an elaborate trousseau, in preparation for her forthcoming wedding and honeymoon. As luck would have it, the shop made a mistake on her order. The wedding gown arrived on time, but the trousseau didn't—and the bride had to leave on her honeymoon without any of her new clothes. As a result she had to cut short her bridal tour and forego a number of swanky parties that had been planned in her honor. Later she sued the shop for damages, demanding reimbursement for the mortification she had suffered, and the court granted her claim. The judge said the bride should be compensated not only for missing the parties but also for "the humiliation of going to her husband without a suitable trousseau." Some courts, however, require a more specific, dollars-and-cents injury before any damages can be awarded.

May a Person Carry a Grudge "Beyond the Grave"—By Means of His Will?

A man got into legal difficulties with his partner. In the midst of the bitter court battle that followed, the man died. In his will, he left a substantial bequest to his son—but only on the condition that the son would carry on the fight against the partner to the bitter end. As it happened, the son had no stomach for the controversy. So he went to court to test the validity of this "grudge clause," arguing that it was against the public interest to perpetuate a quarrel in this way. But the judge disagreed and held that the unusual proviso was quite legal. The judge pointed out that the son wasn't required to do anything unlawful, but only to work for a cause which his father sincerely believed to be just.

May a Dog Bite The Hand That Feeds Him?

A woman had a collie which had the nasty habit of nipping people. One day a delivery man, noticing the dog on the sidewalk, held out a piece of candy. The animal's response was to bite his hand! When the man later sued the dog's owner



for damages, she insisted that his gesture had "provoked" the dog into biting. However, the court made her pay for the delivery man's injury. The judge felt that any dog mean enough to "bite the hand that feeds him" should not be allowed to run loose at all.

One rainy morning, a housewife went to a neighborhood store to buy a blouse. As she entered, she stepped on a wet spot tracked in by a previous customer. The woman slipped, fell, and broke her ankle. Later she sued the merchant for leaving his floor in such dangerous condition, but the court rejected her claim. The judge said it was impossible for the merchant to keep the floor from getting wet on a rainy day, when customers kept tracking in water from outdoors.

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